PROF, SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: He said that no files were burnt. He says that the fire did not damage anything but the window frames and other things. Regarding his last answer I would like to have a clarification. My question is whether necessary steps have been taken to continue the CBI investigation properly. It is not just a question of files being burnt. But the question is of continuing the investigation which was ordered by the Minister himself as per his own announcement at the Press Conference, My question was whether the files were burnt or not and whether the investigation is continuing properly.

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र : सभापति जी, असल में आग लगने की वजह से सी०बी०आई० की जांच में कोई बाधा नहीं पहुंची है और जांच की समूची व्यवस्था की गयी है ।

श्री आनन्द प्रकाश गौतम : माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, अभी मंत्रीजी ने अपने उत्तर में बताया है कि आग शार्ट सर्किट से लगी है और उस में कोई आवश्यक कागजात नहीं जले हैं बल्कि खिड़कियों के दरवाजे और पल्लों को नुकसान हुआ है । महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि यह आग जो लगी तो कितनी देर तक वह कमरा आग की चपेट में रहा और उस में अनुमानित कितना नुकसान हुआ और क्या उसके कारणों की कोई अन्य प्रकार से जांच माननीय मंत्री जी कर रहे हैं? उस निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचे हैं या नहीं ?

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र : सभापति महोदय, शार्ट सर्किट के कारण जो आग लगी वह कमरा नहीं था बल्कि सीढ़ी के बगल में जो मशीन थी, स्विच थे, वहां आग लगी थी । यह आग आधा घंटा पैंतालीस मिनिट लगी होगी कि बुझा दी गयी । इसका कोई दूसरा कारण नहीं था बल्कि केवल बिजली का करंट था ।

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: It is very good that none of tbe important papers have been burnt in this fire. May I take it that the reference to the CBI is being done as a matter of course or whether the Government is satisfied that the matter is *prima fact* sufficiently serious which requires the CBI to go into the matter. Sir, is it the claim of the Government that as a matter of course this was referred to the CBI for inquiry? If the Government was satisfied that there was nothing serious about it, why was the matter referred to them?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute. The question of CBI is about the purchases made by C-DOT. He has not stated that there is going to be a CBI inquiry about the fire. If you see part (b) of the question ____

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : I am sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 402.SHRI V1SHVJIT P. SINGH: Sir

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. have moved to Question No. 402.

Action taken on Maharashtra Govt. proposals on States/National Highways

*402. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1059 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 21st March, 1990 and state what action Central Government have taken on the proposals sent by the Government of Maharashtra for the development of the State Highways and for improvement of the National Highways?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): There has not

been any change of position for development of State Highways as new National Highways, as the 8th Five Year Plan has still not been finalised.

The improvement of National Highways is a continuous process, and a sum of Rs 22.00 crores has been provided in the current year for the development of National Highways in the State of Maharashtra.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Sir, the hon. Minister said that a sum of Rs. 22 crores has been allotted in the current year for the development of National Highways in Maharashtra, What is the total sum in the Budget for the improvement of National Highways? Why such a paltry sum of Rs. 22 crore, which comes to less than Rs. 2 crores per month, has been allotted for this here? Sir, you know the length of Hignway in Maharashtra and the number of accidents taking place there, especially on the Bombay-Poona sector. J would like to know if tnere is any proposal for autobahn 8-lane traffic between Bombay and Poona. 1 would also like to know if you are thinking of constructing a bridge across Bombay Harbour to run in Nheva Sheva especially now since Nheva Sheva is being developed into a big port and the traffic is bound to increase. Has the Minister any plan for a joint Committee to be set up with the State Government? is the finance going to be tied up with the Asian Development Bark, etc.?

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, the hon. Member's question falls into several parts or there are several questions in it As far as Maharashtra is concerned, it has about 2918 kilometres of National Highway system which may be 9 per cent of the total National Highways which we have. The State Government has been changing its priorities from time to time and from Plan to Plan, AS for the Seventh Plan, they had requested that the Ratnagiri-Nagpur road be taken up on a priority basis. But, Sir, the National Transport Committee and the Planning Commis sion did rot agree to this and they approved only a stretch of 130 kilometres from Ratnagiri to Kohlapur. As I have explamed, the Eighth Five-Year Plan is yet to be finalised and the recommendations made by the State Government will certainly receive priority.

As far as the bridge link that he has referred to is concerned, the Oran-New Bombay bridge link was considered earlier at the request of the State Government and both the consultarcy firms as well as the Committee set up for the purpose rejected it for environmental reasons. Now the proposal regarding Sibri and Nheva Sheva is receiving the attention of the Government. We have been having discussion with the Planning Commission at present on this point. I have myself addressed a letter to the bon. Chief Minister of Maharashtra about considering this proposal.

Such Highways are important links and the question of financing them will come only at a later stage. But certainly we will attach great importance, more so because this Ministry is very much concerned with the development of Nheva Sheva Port for which we have already spent more than Rs. 1000 crores and it is our only high tech port in India.

As far as the Bombay-Pune link to which he referred is concerned, as he knows that 4-A is the National Highway and 4-laning is going on in specific streches till it reaches Panvel from where it is a State Highway. We do attach maximum importance to it. It is only the Ahmedabad road which has been taken up for funding by international agencies. We have been in touch with the Government of Maharashtra on all these issues.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Considering the resource crunch and the sum which has been allocated. I would like to know whether there is a national plan for involvement of the private sector in the road-building industry in the form of toll tax, etc. I would like to know whether there is such a proposal before the Government. I remember that the Minister had made a statement few months back saying that he had plans to levy about 5 per cent cess on petrol and diesel. This amount could be utilised exclusively for road building. Since the petrol has already been taxed so high, would he consider putting a claim to the Finance Ministry that out of the already increased tax some amount may be earmarked for road building.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, it involves two questions. As for the cess, in the Central Assembly which was predecessor to Parliament, there was a cess collected from petroleum products. It was 1/4 per cent and it was raised further. In 1988, a Resolution was passed by both the Houses, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha raising this cess to 5 per cent of the basic price of the crude. But, unfortunately, this has not been implemented. This would have certainly augmented the Central Road Fund. And we have been requesting the Finance Ministry to pass on this sum for road development which is very important from the national point of view both in terms of employment as well as communications. But, unfortunately, the previous Government did not consider it although both the Houses had passed tins Resolution. And no w again we have taken up this question with the Ministry of Finance and requested them that this should be implemented as per the Resolution of both the Houses of Parliament.

Sir, there have been a number of ideas floated, one of them has been the involvement of private sector both in express highway system as well as in the important bridges on a toll basis. And it is only a few days ago that we have a national seminar on this issue organised by the Institution of Engineers of India and the Indian Road Congress, and certainly the policy of the Government is to welcome any such initiative if any concrete proposals come. And we are considering looking at certain critical corridors of the national highway system where, if proposals come, we certainly can consider such proposals.

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister as to how much money has been sanctioned for the maintenance and improvement of the national highway in the State of Orissa? I would also like to know whether in view of tourist importance of Orissa..

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: The question is about Maharashtra.

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS: I know it is concerned with your State. But ____

SHRI VlTHALRAO MADHA-VRAO JADHAV: And it is only concerned with Marathwada. This Unstarred Question No. 1059 was about Marathwada. The original question was concerned with Marathwada.

AN HON. MEMBER: The question is concerned with national highway. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Sir, does it relate to Marathwada or national highway ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: 'The proposals as sent by the Government of Maharashtra'. Naturally...

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS: I would like to know from the Mi-nister whether in view ofthe tourist importance of Orissa..'.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. Orissa will not come, the question Is about Maharashtra. .

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, it says, 'for the development of State Highways and for improvement of the National Highways'.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. Shri Pramod Mahajan.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Sir, if there is any national highway which connects Marathwada with Orissa, does it not come under the development of the national high-way?

SHRl VITHALRAO MADHAV-RAO JADHAV: I will accept your proposal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That may not be a part of the letter written by the Maharashtra Government.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन : अध्यक्ष जी मेरे प्रश्न के दो भाग हैं। पहले भाग में मैं यह पूछना चाहूंगा कि अभी तक मंत्री महोदय ने जो उत्तर दिया है, वह मूल प्रश्न का उत्तर नहीं है। मूल प्रश्न अगर आप देखें तो उसमें यह पूछा गया है कि महाराष्ट्र राज्य के राजमार्गों के विकास तथा राष्ट्रीय राजमार्गों के सुधार के संबंध में महाराष्ट्र सरकार द्वारा भेज गए प्रस्तावों पर क्या कार्य-वाही हुई है ? न मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में यह बताया है कि वे प्रस्ताव कौन-कौन से हैं जो महाराष्ट्र सरकार की ओर से भेजे गए हैं और उस पर क्या-क्या कार्यवाही की है ? मैं पहले प्रश्न के (अ) भाग में यह जानना चाहूंगा कि महाराष्ट्र सरकार की ओर से इस संबंध में कौन से प्रस्ताव भेजे गए थे और हर प्रस्ताव पर क्या कार्यवाही हुई है ?

उसका दूसरा हिस्सा यह होगा कि पुणे-मुम्बई राष्ट्रीय महामार्ग पनवेलठाणे होते हुए मुम्बई जाता है, लेकिन गत 10-15 वर्षों से इस रास्ते से कोई मुम्बई नहीं जाता, सभी खाड़ी पुल मार्ग से जाते हैं ।

अब इस खाड़ी पुल मार्ग को जो पनवेल से चैम्बूर जाता है वास्तविक असली राष्ट्रीय महामार्ग यही है क्योंकि सारे वाहन इसी से जाते हैं, तो मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा कि इस मार्ग को क्या वह राष्ट्रीय महामार्ग का दर्जा देंगे ? मेरे प्रश्न का दूसरा यह हिस्सा है:

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN : In regard to the last point made by the hon. Member, as I have said, the Bombay-Pune National Highway No. 4 ends at Panveel. Though it is called Bombay-Pune road, it ends at Panvel. Our juris diction ends there. Then, this comes under the Bombay Municipal en virons. It is not under our charge. The development has also to be undertaken by _____

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: It ends at Panvel, but goes *via* Thane.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: The development has also to be undertaken by the State Government. I am talking about the Bombay-Pune road as per the national highway system. It is a territorial jurisdiction. The jurisdiction ends at Panvel. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: It is a very good old road. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: That is different question.

Sir, every highway that can be considered as a national highway is not a national highway. What is a national highway is what is declared as a national highway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is his impression.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Of course, popular Imagination is there. It is true that it is called as 'National Highway'. But it is not so.

As I said, two roads have been proposed for inclusion in the national highway grid. One is the Ratnagiri— Kolhapur—Solapur—Latur—Nand-ed—Yeotmal—Nagpur road. The other is the Western coastal highway, the Rewas-Redi road. They wanted priority to be given to these two roads. But as I explained, the Planning Commission only accepted the Ratnagiri-Kolhapur stretch of 130 kms., out of a total of 807 kms. Since the State Government was adopting various priorities, from time to time, all these are screened by the Planning Commission and also by the Finance Ministry. The Eighth Plan projections have been sent to them and any proposals, any new proposals, that may come from the State Government will also be discussed with them. As soon as we finalise, the Plan we will have a clear picture.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHA-VRAO JADHAV: Sir, as I said earlier, I asked a question, Un-starred Question No. 1059, which was like this: '(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Maharashtra have submitted proposals to the Central Government for conversion of State highways into national highways ?' The answer given was 'The Maharashtra Government have submitted proposals in relation to 11 State highways, having a total length of 4,679 kms.' Then, Sir, the Government was very negligent while giving answer to part (b) of my question. I had asked 'Which State highways in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State are proposed to be converted into national highways ?'. The answer given was 'Due to constraint of resources, it has not been possible to declare any State highway in the Marathwada region as national highway'. May I put question to the hon. Minister ? Does he know where the Marath-

I wada region is ? Does he know which State highways in Marathwada have been proposed for conversion into national highways ? I pointed this out the other day also. When Mr. S. B. Chavan was the Chief Minister, he himself had sent the proposals. But the hon. Minister does not know which are the State highways, in relation to Marathwada, which have been proposed for conversion into national highways.

Another thing I want to point out is that although Marathwada is one-third geographical area of Maharashtra, we are having only 50 kms. of national highway.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Put your question.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHA-; VRAO JADHAV : Then, Sir, in reply to part (c) of the question, it has been stated 'It will be seen in the Eighth Plan'. I do not know what they mean by this. This Government talks loudely that they want to give preference *to* the development of backward regions. Now, in the case of Marathwada, which is a backward region, four State highways have been proposed by the Government of Maharashtra for conversion into national highways. Is the hon. Minister going to assure the House that whatever proposals in regard to the Marathwarda region will be given priority and that the State highways proposed for conversion will be converted into national highways ?

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN:
Sir, as far as the hon. Minister's question is concerned, there have been proposals. But I have confined myself____

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAV-RAO JADHAV: I did not get any opportunity to become a Minister.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: I was confining myself to the pro posals forwarded by the State Go vernment and the priorities allotted by them. The Maharashtra Govern ment in all had sent 11 proposals. The one which was probably referred to and not given priority by them wasSolapur Osmanabad—Beed — Aurangabad —Dhule—Vadodara. Second was, Bombay—Ahmednagar —.Nanded—Jagdalpur. Third was, Ratnagiri—Solapur—Nagpur. Then, Western Coastal highway, Swat— Dhule— Aurangabad—Nanded—Hyderabad, Indore—Amravati—Yeot-mal—Chandrapur—Durg, Aurangabad— Ajantha—Edlabad— Burhanpur, BetuI— Nagpur ---------Chandrapur— Pattagundam, Amravati—Pandhurna and Mangalwadha—Jat— Bel-gaum. All these 11 proposals of 4679 miles were sent. Specifically the priority given, as I said earlier, was for two other different roads. Thet is what I was referring to. As the hon. Members are aware, even now we receive a number of proposals and we screen several proposals. It is not that we are unware of the backwardness of Ma-rathwada. I had myself gone to Aurangabad and spoken about it. Thas is just for the attention of the hon. Member. One of our policies is certainly to see that the backward regions and tribal belts receive attention during the Eighth Five Year Plan.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the fact is that Maharashtra State contributes 50 per cent of all customs duty to the Central pool and also 50 per cent of all direct and indirect taxes. This is a fact and I am sorry, I have to add one more sentence. When the Minister just read out the proposals submitted by the Government of Maharashtra, each one of those proposals about the National Highway is to link Maharashtra State with the neighbouring States. All those roads finally end up in other States. *(Interruptions).* That is a fact. So, the total kilometres which you are giving is wrong. The tota kilometres proposed by the Maharashtra Government is far less because those are all roads which are passing through Maharashtra. We want that the prosperity which is enjoyed by Maharashtra State may also be enjoyed by all the other neighbouring States, but this Government is not taking any action on that at all.

In the light of the fact that the Bombay port contributes 50 per cent of the total customs duties, in the light of the fact that Maharashtra State contributes 50 per cent of all excise duties, I would like to know what special proposal is being envisaged by the Central Government on its own to develop Bombay port and Maharashtra through a network of totally modern National Highway.

श्री यशवंत सिन्हा : ये सवाल पूछ रहे हैं कि डांट रहे हैं ?

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, with your permission if I may submit, I do not accept the basic premise ofthe hon. Member. Bombay port has been a main port of India and everybody knows that it collects a large sum of money by way of customs duty, imports to India come through Bombay port. So, that is not the way to look at it. The goods which come to...

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Do you know the backlog of goods at Bombay port ? *(Interruptions).*

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, the honourable Member, who is a very dear friend, need not be agitated about it. We do pay attention, but due to constraint of resources it will have to be shared between the various areas, particularly, as was explained in the case of Marathwada and other back-

ward _ areas..... *(Interruptions)..*
So we will have to provide links which which are national highway and thereforee ,there are claims varfcui States, and that isbut natural.'; But; due to constraint,of resources we will have to see which one can be picked up on a priority basis.

Steps to check forged passports:

NO.43 SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the cases detected during the first four months of the current year egarding forged passports; and

(b) what steps are propo:-ed to be taken by Government to check the recurrence of forged passports especially in view of the alarming growth of terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH): (a) Information is being collected.

(b) It has been decided to introduce a More Secured Passport (MSP) using heat activated security film which will make forging of passports very difficult and where attempted easily detectable. Officials concerned are briefed from time to time about nature of forgeries being committed on passports.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Sir, regarding these passports, there are two aspects of the matter. With regard to the first one, I am really disappointed that Government does not have figures of cases for the last four months, "Information is being collected," I want to ask my first supplementary on that, I want to know from the honourable Minister, in reply to my first supplementary, about this. It is welcome that some measures are taken to issue a new kind of passport which cannot be easily forged"ind/i^*,vvhich forgeries , can be easily;detecied.""The issue is, today terrorism.1s.b4 the rise the country and we find that at every place in the country there is some sort of security check where they are harassing innocent citizens. The situation is such that forged pessport holders can get through easily whereas the genuine person is not getting a passport even. Because this concerns the External Affairs Ministry, I want to know what steps are being taken to streamline the Passport Offices, because that is where the real problem is.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, 1 appreciate the concern of the honourable Member. We have taken a few steps. One is that we are computerizing the whole system. We have tlso got permission to add to the staff. Because the pressure is too much, therefore, new staff is being added. We are also examining the possibility of establishing some new Passport Offices! About the forgeries that he has referred to, there is a delay because we have to get information from various investigating agencies, and that is why there is a delay ?

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Please speak into the mike so that we can listen.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: *Prima facie* we have some information, but I thought that that may not serve the purpose of the honourable Member's query,.... *(Interruptions)*....

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: I don't think [be has got it, _____ *(Interruptions)."...* But whatever information be has got, he must share it with Of. It cannot happen that they do not have the last four months' figures, Either the figures are so alarming or.... *(Interruptions)....*

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: No, the honourable Member need not get excited. The *prima facie* figure we have is 221